As instructors, the Teaching Assistants and myself assume that you are all adults taking the class by choice. The class requires you to cultivate and maintain what I consider to be essential characteristics of good students: curiosity, courage, and discipline.

Class time and lab time will allow for a large amount of discussion of various topics, many of which are quite controversial. Thus, the following are the ground rules that we expect everyone to respect.

1. We agree to create a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment for our own benefit and the benefit of our class and broader community.

2. We agree to respect and give voice to our own viewpoints, even when they appear to be internally conflicting and contradictory.

3. We agree to respect and support our peers, Teaching Assistants, and professor in giving voice to their own viewpoints, even if they may be opposed to our own.

4. We agree to emphasize statements beginning with “I think” or “I feel” as a way to introduce our views when faced with other peoples’ conflicting perspectives or claims.

5. We agree to support others and ourselves in being silent, if that is what feels like the best approach to a difficult discussion. We are free to withdraw from any interaction at any time if we feel unsafe in any way.

6. We agree that there are no stupid questions. Questions, and all lines of inquiry, reflect interests and one main purpose of this course is to support our discovery of both our interests and the world in which we find ourselves.

7. We agree to take full responsibility for what we do with the learning opportunities provided in this course.